



Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0603

February 3, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1300 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C., 20301

Dear Secretary Austin,

I am writing to request more information and express my serious concern about a Chinese balloon flying over Montana and potentially conducting spy operations. Specifically, I am concerned that the balloon flew over the Malmstrom Air Force Base (Malmstrom) which is one of the three U.S. Air Forces Bases that operates, maintains, and secures the Minuteman III ICBM. It is completely unacceptable for communist China to invade our airspace – this is yet another blatant example of Chinese aggression against the homeland. The Biden Administration must start putting America first and recognize that China is the greatest threat to our freedom, values, and way of life.

This incident is only the most recent example of China's brazen espionage attempt – it is abundantly clear that the Chinese Communist Party is engaging in a multilayered approach to spy on Americans. The Biden Administration must do more to prevent the Chinese Communist Party from targeting Americans. The Biden Administration must determine how to take this balloon down safely, identify the true purpose of it, and analyze the information they have already collected from the balloon. It has been reported that the Pentagon advised President Biden against shooting down the balloon. However, it is necessary that the Air Force secure the balloon to analyze all the data that has been collected.

It was appropriate for Secretary Blinken to delay his meeting with President Xi Jinping that was scheduled for next week. However, in any future meeting the Administration must raise this issue directly and make crystal clear that this is unacceptable – and reiterate that any additional aircraft that cross into American airspace will be dealt with immediately.

I am writing to request a security briefing on this situation as soon as possible to hear why the balloon penetrated so far into our country before it was identified, what the true purpose of it was, and how we can prevent this invasion from taking place in the future. I look forward to hearing from the Department of Defense and I urge the Biden Administration to do everything in its power to ensure that the American people are safe and secure.

Sincerely,

Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress